


The Council folk speak up about the temporary closure of Packer Ave. (1)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Lehigh University, Southside February 24, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about Lehigh University and the Southside* 

Ok, you are not new to the question about a test of the closing of Packer Ave. between Vine and Webster.

And you probably don't need to be reminded that the issue here is control over your neighborhood (though this issue does have ramifications for all of us who drive in Bethlehem).

Lehigh is asking "us" to conduct a test whose end result is, if positive, in effect, to end the main function of a busy, healthy street on the Southside. Is their reason compelling?

Even if you don't live in this area, you need to be alert to the kinds of things that could happen in your neighborhood.

Gadfly loves to compare his thinking to our elected officials. Join him. The Council members gave us clear and substantial rationales.

Remember, too, that one of the main reasons for the Gadfly project is to help you know your Councilpeople better so that you can be the most informed voter you can be.

This is a good opportunity.

Whom do you agree with, disagree with? Who makes you think? Who gave you something new to think about? Whom are you glad to see with a seat at the Head Table?

Councilman Colon (votes for the temporary closure)

<https://youtu.be/VKiXdtvQrYw>

- I'm curious to see what comes out of the temporary closure.

- We've already vacated a couple streets that we didn't have this opportunity to test.
- I remember how big deal it was when that street (Broad Street) was closed and then reopened.
- We have an opportunity to have a temporary closing and then come back to the table and see what happens.
- Now is a good time . . . to do the study. (students there, unlikely weather event, construction conditions on Lehigh campus)
- Where I stand on permanent closure, who knows.
- I'm encouraged by the Mayor's comments about having another public hearing.

Councilwoman Crampsie Smith (votes against the temporary closure)

<https://youtu.be/NLeppaFF1Zs>

- I do have concerns about the temporary closure. One is the proximity to Broughal Middle School.
- I worry about their [Broughal students] maturity level.
- There's also St. Peter's Church . . .
- Also is the concern that the Southside is so congested already.
- For many walkability is not an option [people with physical disabilities, an aging population] impeding people attending Lehigh events.
- I wonder [from the community perspective] if this isn't an extreme jump.
- Sophisticated crosswalk like done at Moravian . . . overpasses, walkways.
- I wonder if we're not taking an extreme leap.
- I just have a lot of questions. Perhaps in the future I would be more inclined to agree.

Van Wirt and Reynolds next—

